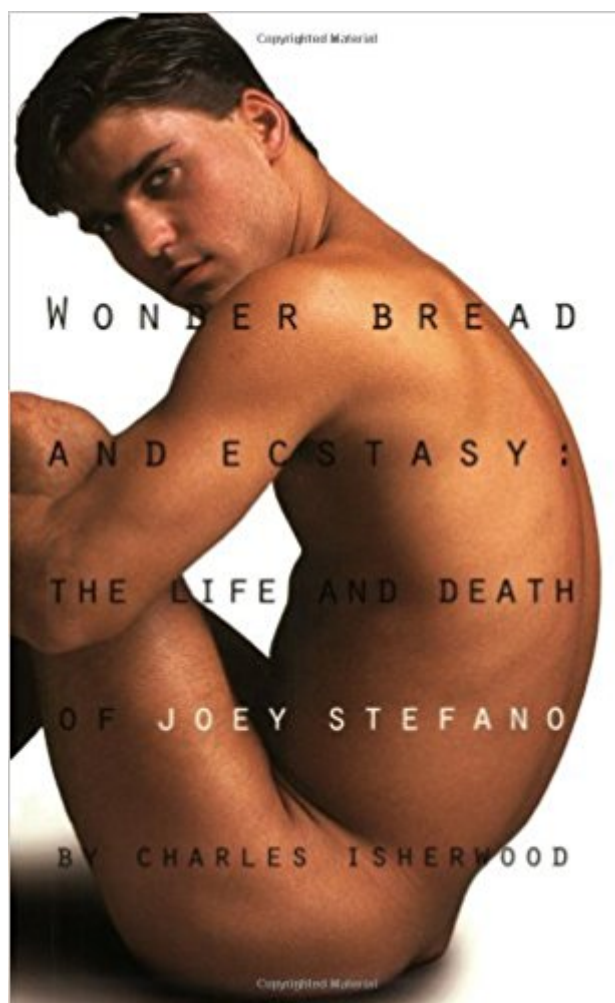


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Wonder Bread & Ecstasy: The Life And Death Of Joey Stefano



Synopsis

The meteoric rise and sudden, dramatic fall of a young gay male porn star.

Book Information

Paperback: 220 pages

Publisher: Alyson Books; 1st edition (November 1, 1996)

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Customer Reviews

Isherwood begins with the famous words of Dr. Samuel Johnson, "All excellence has a right to be recorded", and while this is solid enough justification for the biography, his execution of the task is far from excellent. This is not for lack of trying, it appears that I. has employed all of his talent and training as a journalist to their fullest degree. He has found those who knew Joey when he was still Nick from South Philly and has collected revealing statements about Stefano's own take on his life from rare interviews, usually from studio-backed skin mags and old issues of AVN. He fleshed these out with reminiscences from the auteurs who gave him his start (notably ChiChi LaRue, the corpulent granddiva of gay porn, and bisexual transsexual Karen Dior, who starred with Stefano in his first adult film), the stars whom Stefano worked with, old roommates and friends. These form the heart of I.'s writing, but his account lacks any sort of soul. If there were a phrase which would best describe I.'s book it would be artificially compassionate. Rather than letting Joey's truly lamentable decline into depression and heavy substance abuse create genuine sympathy with the reader, I. never gets over the journalist's need to offer an interpretation, no matter how superficial or obvious. The title of the book comes from two staples of Stefano's existence, the peanut butter sandwiches made on fluffy white bread he ordered from the gay-owned grocery store near his apartment in W. Hollywood and the popular designer drug he became increasingly dependent upon towards the end

of his short life. But instead of making us more sorry for the blue-collar kid who had a rough life, wound up with HIV dying in a vicious industry, it makes Stefano sound like the gay Elvis.

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